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Business &amp; Finance | 23 April 2009 19:35 CET

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## Make good use of District Assemblies Common Fund-Bagbin tells DCEs

By Stephen Odoi Larbi - Ghanaian Chronicle

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The Majority Leader in Parliament, Hon. Alban Sumani K. Bagbin, has warned all District Chief Executives (DCEs) to use the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) for its intended purposes to benefit the people, rather than using it for operational costs and other purposes, which do not have any impact in the lives of the people.

"The District Assemblies Common Fund is for development, but some of the assemblies use it for other purposes such as administrative costs, maintenance of vehicles, buying of fuels for

vehicles, and other operational costs instead of development. That is not what the Common Fund is meant for," he noted.

Hon. Bagbin was speaking in support of the adoption of the motion for the proposed formula for sharing the District Assemblies Common Fund in Parliament yesterday.

He tasked his colleague members in the discharge of their duties in the area of monitoring and evaluation, to look critically how the fund is used, since a lot of monies are channelled to operational costs, instead of development of the districts.

In seconding the motion, after it had been moved by the Second Deputy Speaker, Prof. Aaron Michael Oquaye, and reaffirming Hon. Bagbin's claim, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Garu/Tempene, Hon. Dominic Azimbe Azumah, urged members of the House to be circumspect in the disbursement of the Common Fund, so that it benefits the people, rather than using it for other purposes.

"Colleague members, we want to see that indeed the District Common Fund had benefited the people," he stressed.

Hon. Enoch Teye Mensah, MP for Ningo Prampram, in his submission over the motion, noted that there was going to be a paradigm shift in the disbursement of the District Assemblies Common Fund, to make sure that the District Chief Executives utilise the fund based on the purpose of which it was intended for.

According to Article 252 (2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, and the District Assemblies Common Fund Act, 1993, Act 455, Parliament is mandated to make provision for the allocation of not less than five per cent (5%) of the total revenue of Ghana to the District Assemblies' Common Fund, for the implementation of development programmes in the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies.

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Section 7 (a) of the District Assemblies' Common Fund Act, 1993, Act 455 further requires the administrator of the District Assemblies' Common Fund, to propose annually, for the approval of Parliament, a Formula for sharing the Common Fund to the District Assemblies.

The idea of the establishment of the District Assemblies Common Fund was to supplement local generating revenues, to broaden the scope of the funds available to District Assemblies, such that they can take major development programmes in the districts.

But, since then, most Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies have virtually depended on the District Assemblies Common Fund for development in their respective districts, to the neglect of the mobilisation of their local funds.

Five factors were taken into consideration in developing this year's formula for the sharing of the District Assemblies Common Fund.

They are; the need factor which indicates that sharing take into consideration the level of development of each district, with the view to addressing imbalances in the level of development, the responsive factor which indicates that sharing should motivate the districts to generate more local revenue for their development, the equality factor, which demands that all Districts should have access to maximum level of funding.

The rest are; service pressure factor, which states that urban areas should be compensated for the over-utilisation of their facilities, and the reserved factor, which demands a reserve fund to cater for contingencies and bulk purchases for the districts.

In all, an amount of three hundred and forty-five million, six hundred and eighty-seven thousand, four hundred and eighty-three Ghana Cedis (GH 345,687,483.00) has been approved in the 2009 Budget estimates for the District Assemblies Common Fund by Parliament.

At the consideration stage of the proposed formula, the Committee, on the whole, observed that a total amount of ten million (\$10m) dollars in its cedi equivalent from the Fund would be used as matching funds for the District Development Facility (DDF), and that in the 2009 formula 6 per cent of the reserved funds for Members of Parliament would be shared equally between monitoring, evaluation and development.

The Committee further observed that 2 per cent of the Reserved Fund would be set aside for the use of the Minister of Local Government, and would be subject to his discretion, and that the Ministry has directed all MMDAs to use a portion of their allocations of the Common Fund, for issues affecting Persons with Disabilities.

The Committee also noted that the formula does not fully make room for gender specific interventions.

It also observed that sanitation management has been a major problem for the country of late, the worse being that of the cities, regional and district capitals, as a result of population growth, plastics and other human activities. To this effect, the Committee has therefore introduced the sanitation indicator, which will help reduce filth and improve general cleanliness in the country.

Having made these observations, the Committee recommended that the sector Minister of Local Government and the Office of the District Assemblies Common Fund Administrator, collaborate to issue a directive to all MMDAs to use portions of their allocation for gender activities.

The Committee also recommended that the necessary steps be taken to ensure the speedy release of funds to the Districts and Parliamentarians, to ensure effective development.

It further recommended that the Public-Private Partnership engagement between the sanitation service providers and government, be strengthened to help improve the sanitation situation in the country, and that the sanitation module of the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), be increased from thirty per cent to thirty-five per cent in the guidelines to be issued by the Administrator of the Fund, to enable the programme engage more youth in the country.

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